Directions:

1. Read and code the text.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Write your questions and/or comments on the article (***at least 15!***).
3. Write a reflection on your own sheet of paper using **IRRROC method**(***at least one page-6 paragraphs***)

*Your article (with comments and codes) and reflection are due Friday (stapled)!*

**Step 1: Skim** the article using these symbols as you read:

**(+)** agree, **(-)** disagree, **(\*)** important, **(!)** surprising, **(?)** wondering

**Step 2: Number** the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

* Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
* Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
* Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
* Observations about how the **writer’s strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

**Step 3:** A **final quick read** noting anything you may have missed during the first two reads.

**Flamin’ Hot Cheetos inspire fanatic loyalty among kids**

*October 11, 2012 | By Monica Eng | Chicago Tribune*

On a recent sunny fall afternoon, students from Lake View High School streamed out of a nearby convenience store munching after-school snacks.

Some bought cookies and snack cakes. Others got soft drinks and candy. But the majority walked out of Touchdown Food Mart with crinkly orange bags of Flamin' Hot Cheetos -- sometimes with warm cheese sauce poured on top of the fiery red curls.

"Once you start eating them, they are kind of addicting, and you can't help it," said sophomore Zian Garcia. "Personally I have been eating them for years, and I cannot stop. I just have this urge to eat them."

In the 20 years since Frito-Lay launched Flamin' Hot Cheetos as a snack aimed at urban convenience stores, the product has inspired dozens of spicy competitors, multiple Facebook fan pages, a viral rap video and legions of loyal young fans.

But for many school administrators and public [health](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-11/news/chi-20yearold-snack-with-high-levels-of-salt-and-fat-inspires-fanatic-loyalty-among-kids-20121011_1_ashley-gearhardt-snacks-addiction) advocates, the wild popularity of Flamin' Hots inspires concern. To many, they've become shorthand for everything that is wrong with the diets of American children, whose obesity rates have tripled since 1980.

While it's true that Flamin' Hots, also known as Hot Cheetos, deliver high levels of salt, fat and artificial colors with little nutrition or fiber in return, the same can be said for similar snacks.

It's not hard to find kids who say they eat Flamin' Hots or similar products every day, sometimes even for breakfast. If that sounds like an addiction, some scientists say it may not be far from the truth.

Emerging research on food addiction suggests that processed salty, fatty or sweet foods of any kind -- also called "hyperpalatable foods" -- can trigger brain responses similar to those created by controlled substances in addicted individuals.

People react differently to a processed food than they do to foods found whole in nature, said Ashley Gearhardt, an assistant professor of clinical psychology at the [University of Michigan.](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-11/news/chi-20yearold-snack-with-high-levels-of-salt-and-fat-inspires-fanatic-loyalty-among-kids-20121011_1_ashley-gearhardt-snacks-addiction)

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It's something that has been engineered so that it is fattier and saltier and more novel to the point where our body, brain and pleasure centers react to it more strongly than if we were eating, say, a handful of nuts," Gearhardt said. "Going along with that, we are seeing those classic signs of addiction, the cravings and loss of control and preoccupation with it."

If Flamin' Hot Cheetos have any serious competition for young urban allegiance, it's from a Mexican import called Takis, made by Barcel. Especially popular in the Latino community, Takis are tortilla chips that are rolled, fried and coated in lime and chili powder.

"The first time I ate Takis, I thought I would just eat a couple and put it away, but I ate half the bag," said Iman Rana, a senior at Whitney Young High School in Chicago. "They are just like a better version of everything."

Are snacks like Flamin' Hots addictive? For some people, maybe so. Gene-Jack Wang, a senior scientist at Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York state, in September co-wrote a review of the neurobiological overlaps between obesity and substance addiction.

In both conditions, the paper notes, the perceived importance of the reward (food or drugs) becomes exaggerated at the expense of other rewards, triggering "abrupt dopamine increases" that "can override the brain's … control mechanisms" that would normally moderate consumption.

"You can almost equate the craving (for processed food) to that of cocaine," said Wang, a radiologist.

Gearhardt said she is troubled by research suggesting that traditional whole foods might lose their appeal after taste buds become accustomed to certain processed foods.

"In addition to the taste-bud shift, there is some suggestion that these foods could alter the brain's dopamine (reward) system," she said, "and we may no longer be as sensitive to the foods that used to be rewarding."

She said one study found that rats that ate "junk food" and were put back on a regular diet would "walk through electrified mazes, shocking their little feet in search of the junk food again."

But should food-makers be punished for doing their job -- essentially making something taste so delicious that customers can't get enough?

"I don't blame them for creating it," Gearhardt said. "I think there is a lot of competition to create … the most rewarding and potentially addictive product possible so people crave it and they want to buy another bag.

"But once the evidence has come out that they have created a substance that is capable of hijacking the neural system ... then I feel like it falls under their ethical obligation to ask how this should affect the way they market and push the product."

Angela Odoms-Young, who studies dietary patterns in urban communities, said she appreciates the emerging work on food addiction but asks: "Do we really need to prove that people are addicted to something before we start limiting things we know are unhealthy to our children, things that have been linked to poor health outcomes for decades?"

"We know that Flamin' Hot Cheetos are, at best, a 'sometimes food,'" said Odoms-Young, an assistant professor in kinesiology and nutrition at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "But you have some kids eating three or four bags a day, and that is inevitably going to replace healthier foods."

Some parents may not realize how often their children are eating Flamin' Hots until they wind up taking the kids to the doctor over "concern for blood in their stool," according to Dr. Kathleen Berchelmann, a pediatrician at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Though parents may have a scare over the false alarm -- caused by red food dye -- Berchelmann said it also offers a great opportunity for a lesson on gluttony and moderation.

"When you eat something that sends you to the ER with your parents," she said, "that's not something you forget."

Reflection topic:

1. Do you agree or disagree that hot cheetoes are bad for your diet? Based on the article above, what are three reasons why someone should not eat foods like Hot Cheetos or Takis? Don’t forget to support your reasons with evidence from the article.